

RE: R: R: R: Common room

Von:

kevin galalae (kgalalae@hotmail.com)

Gesendet: Mittwoch, 3. Juni 2009 15:48:13

An: Giovanni de Grandis (tutor.politicalphilo@conted.ox.ac.uk)

Giovanni,

You have misrepresented the intentions and content of my postings. I have never suggested that ideas spring from ignoble motives without proving it. Furthermore, what I have always tried (and obviously succeeded too well) is to show how holding certain ideas leads to immoral acts or is used to justify injustice and inequality. If you go back to my posts and read them without being blinded by anger, the evidence will speak for itself. Your accusation that I attack dead philosophers and living people is absurd. What I have attacked is the flaws in their theories, which is what political philosophy is supposed to do, were it not for the deep-rooted hypocrisy that permeates every aspect of capitalist societies and of the "education" system in capitalist societies. And that is exactly what you and some of the students could not take. In eliciting the kind of anger that I did, I have brought to the surface deep-seated prejudices and in being kicked off the course I have demonstrated that although the West and by extension Oxford boast to encourage free debate and free speech, it only does so as long as one does not rock the foundation of the power structure and the cosy arrangements between the established elements of society.

Your accusation that I tried to turn the course into a tribune of my ideas and that I have forced others to discuss my ideas is once again laden with blinding hatred and a total lack of honesty. How can I possibly force anyone to do such thing when this is a virtual course? It is the force of my ideas that people have found irresistible to engage, like it or not. And if we cannot discuss our political ideas in a political philosophy course then what good is such a course for? A cash cow for the university? A sham attempt to show the world that Oxford is in step with the times? Are you suggesting that in such a course one ought to dilute one's ideas so as to blend in and stroke the sensibilities of the many? How poorly this reflects on the university and on you!

I take your reluctance to answer my questions as a no. I point out that I am entitled to know how such a process will unfold. I also point out that in withholding our correspondence from the decision makers you will have aided and abated in the miscarriage of justice. And I promise you that this will come back to haunt you.

Sincerely,

Kevin Galalae

Subject: R: R: Common room
Date: Wed, 3 Jun 2009 13:58:41 +0100
From: tutor.politicalphilo@conted.ox.ac.uk
To: kgalalae@hotmail.com

Kevin,

I will ignore what is in the P.S. and simply point out one thing to you. This whole issue is unpleasant enough for everybody. I am trying to learn a lesson from the mistakes that I have made. I think you should better drop the explanation that you have spoken some inconvenient truth, exposed people's hidden motives and demonstrated your intellectual superiority and that has generated mean feelings against you. I don't think this was the case. Two things have not been accepted. One is your habit of attacking some of the ideas that you oppose not on their own merit, but by suggesting that they spring from ignoble motives. (The implication of this attitude is that who disagrees is not simply wrong, but evil. I hope you see this is the attitude of all religious fanatics and political repressive regimes). When you do that to dead philosophers it is a lack of charity, but when you do that with your fellow students this becomes a personal attack from a stranger and how can you fail to see that nobody accepts to have one's own integrity questioned by a stranger? The second is that you have subtly tried to force other students to discuss and consider your ideas. I have been stupid in not realizing it earlier, but it became apparent in the direct democracy forum. You have tried to turn the course into a tribune to express your ideas.

These problems could have been discussed and solved in the common room discussion, but things took another turn that made it impossible to fix the problems.

And this is my last comment on the whole issue.

Regards

Giovanni

Giovanni,

I appreciate and I am not surprised by your integrity. You are right, I should have followed your advice to a tee. This is what I have to say in my defense. I did follow your advice as pertains to placing my long postings in attachments throughout lesson five when I was engaged by Max. However, that did not work too well since the debate became separated from the forum and what is the point of having a forum, which is a tool of interaction, when there are parallel discussions hidden in attachments. It defeats the whole purpose. That is why I returned to the forum.

Given the content of my postings, I believe I kept my contributions as short as possible. It is extremely difficult to compress complex reasoning and examples in support of such reasoning without taking some space. I did the best I could. While the length of my postings may have bothered some, we all know that the reason for this meanspirited backlash is a response to the content of my postings. So let us not mix words.

It is important to post our correspondence because it shows that I am not insensitive to other students and that I have acted in good faith and to the best of my abilities. It is also important because it shows that you must bear some of the burden of responsibility.

Sincerely,

Kevin Galalae

P.S. I have just noticed that I can no longer access the course website. If I have already been cut off, should I not have been notified of it first? And how am I supposed to know what occurs on the forum if I can not at least read the content? Before such drastic measure is taken, I should be given the right to defend myself to each and all. I guess I have just joined the illustrious company of Hobbes and the like, whose ideas offended those of Oxford to such an extent that they forgot all about truth and integrity and resorted to barbaric actions. I consider this action equally barbaric. Last but not least, if I cannot access the course I cannot confirm that you are living up to your promise. If you are the one who has cut me off, then this action is self-serving and ignoble.

Subject: R: R: Common room
Date: Wed, 3 Jun 2009 11:56:52 +0100
From: tutor.politicalphilo@conted.ox.ac.uk
To: kgalalae@hotmail.com

Kevin,

I don't agree with with your interpretation of how the events have unfolded, though I should have probably pushed more forcefully the advice to be shorter and gentler (and notice that I had asked you earlier not to be too aggressive, see for instance my posting in the 'Political experiences' discussion, on April 22). I have my share of responsibility in not having done so, and it is not my habit to hide.

Since I am not afraid of the truth I will post our correspondence in the Common Room, as you ask me. But I think that you should consider that if you had followed the advice I had offered you in our private correspondence, things would have not degenerated.

Regards

Giovanni

-----Messaggio originale-----

Da: kevin galalae [<mailto:kgalalae@hotmail.com>]

Inviato: mer 03/06/2009 11.30

A: tutor.politicalphilo

Oggetto: RE: R: Common room

Giovanni,

What I wrote in the common room was in response to allegations that the "length" of my postings was the cause of some students' decision to stop posting in the forums. What Gloria said in no uncertain terms was that it is my fault she and others had stopped contributing. Since I cannot possibly force people to read or engage my postings, it could obviously not have been the "length" of my postings that bothered them. It was, as I have intimated in my email to you, the inhibiting effect my postings had on others; effect that can only be attributed to the fact that my postings inhibited others for one or all of the reasons I outlined in my email to Gloria (i.e. they are too intellectual to engage, too hard to discount, and reveal truths that are hard to face). To Gloria I framed it in an obnoxious way because her attempt to scapegoat me for her shortcomings deserved a forceful response. I should have been more diplomatic,

but hypocrisy riles me up. Now if I had stepped back from the forums as I have suggested in my personal correspondence to you, the sensitive students who stopped posting because of me (for whatever reasons, be it the length, forcefulness, or content of my postings) would have felt encouraged to contribute once again. And if that had been the case, then you would not have had to ask on the common room where everybody was and why people were not posting. So this entire incident would not have occurred. Surely you must see how and why this chain of events has unfolded as it has? And that we could have prevented it from happening if I had stepped back from the forums. Therefore, the fact that I have asked you whether I should step back from the forums is highly relevant to every student who feels that I have stifled the debate. I believe the right thing to do before you conveniently cut me off from the course is to post our correspondence on the common room for all to see. I was not afraid to spell out the truth, regardless of the consequences, and nor should you. For only the truth can set us free. And isn't that what philosophy is about, spelling out the truth regardless what?

Sincerely,
Kevin Galalae

Subject: R: Common room
Date: Wed, 3 Jun 2009 09:10:23 +0100
From: tutor.politicalphilo@conted.ox.ac.uk
To: kgalalae@hotmail.com

Kevin,
if you are cut off from the course it will not be because you have posted many contributions to the forums or because some were rather long: it will be because of what you wrote in the common room. You are an intelligent person and you can certainly see that.

Regards

Giovanni

-----Messaggio originale-----
Da: kevin galalae [<mailto:kgalalae@hotmail.com>]
Inviato: mer 03/06/2009 2.18
A: tutor.politicalphilo
Oggetto: RE: Common room

Giovanni,

In all fairness, I think that before you and your advisors cut me off from the course you should mention to the class that I have approached you for advice on whether I should step back from the forums or not and you have explicitly advised that I should not. I saw this coming and tried to prevent it. I attach our correspondence below:

-----Messaggio originale-----

Da: kevin galalae [<mailto:kgalalae@hotmail.com>]

Inviato: lun 18/05/2009 19.06

A: tutor.politicalphilo

Oggetto:

Hi Giovanni,

I could not help but notice that Ivor and I have become too dominant in the fora discussions. Would you like me to step back to make room for the others? I don't want to be overbearing. On the other hand, I don't want to withhold valuable contributions. Please let me know how to proceed.

Kevin

Hi Kevin,

first of all I am sorry that I had not yet answer to your email from Friday. I have had some troubles with my connection over the weekend and it slept out of my mind. I am very glad that you are enjoying the course so much. I am not teaching online again until next year, but I hope you are still coming to Oxford in August and that we will be able to have a little philosophical chat.

As for your present question, I don't want you to step back or to reduce your contributions. My only suggestions would be two very minor tips. The first is to try not to write messages too long. Let me be clear, most of your message are not too long. A few are a little long and that might discourage those who don't have a lot of time. I also realize that sometimes it is very difficult to develop one's argument in a short space. When you have a long reasoning, my advice is to write the complete argument in an attachment and to give a summary in your post. Those interested will certainly open the attachment and read the whole argument, those with less time or less philosophically minded will read at least the summary and get the essential. (By the way writing a short summary is always a difficult and extremely useful exercise). The other advice is that if you disagree with someone else, unless s/he is someone who is confident and keen on debate (like Ivor, Bruce, Gloria) do not shot all your arrows at them at once: that can be intimidating. Make one objection, trying to single out the one which is more likely to trigger some rethinking and to bring about the most serious difficulty in the position criticized.

Keep enjoying and contributing generously!

Best

Giovanni

Subject: Common room

Date: Tue, 2 Jun 2009 20:23:41 +0100

From: tutor.politicalphilo@conted.ox.ac.uk

To: kgalalae@hotmail.com

Kevin,

some of your messages in the common room have been completely uncalled for, ranting and offensive. I cannot but agree with the feelings expressed by other students and I am very surprised that you have written the things that you have written.

Your behaviour is plainly a violation of the rules of the course, and I will consult with the course manager about the appropriate disciplinary action.

I think that you should apologize to other students and refrain from making any further posting for the time being.

Regards

Giovanni